

B E Y O N D D I V E R S I T Y

ONLINE RESOURCES | DIVERSE READING LIST FOR KIDS

RESOURCES FROM CHAPTER 5: BEYOND DIVERSITY IN EDUCATION

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What we read and engage with directly informs how we see and understand the world around us. Diversity, equity, and inclusion are complex topics, and it is important to begin learning and understanding these topics early, as marginalized and underrepresented individuals often experience discrimination from a very early stage in their lives.

To expand our understanding of communities, identities, and experiences that are different from our own, the authors have curated a reading list for young readers, teens, and parents. The authors make no warranties, express or implied, regarding the books listed below. There are many excellent books available to parents and children that are focused on building understanding across differences and embedding early on the concepts of equity, inclusion and belonging; these are just some to get you started.

The reading list provided below includes books that cover a wide range of topic areas including (but not limited to): racism and racial equity, mental health, immigration, Native American history, Muslim experiences in America after 9/11, gender identity, self-care, and unity across differences. When we read stories of people with different identities and experiences, it helps us develop empathy and compassion for their experiences and propels us to change our own behaviors and thinking about the people around us.

Young Readers

[A Kids Book About Racism](#)

by Jelani Memory

Authored by a Jelani Memory, who recognized that racism was an unavoidable conversation when raising a multicultural family, this book discusses what racism is, how it makes people feel when they experience racial discrimination, and how to identify racial discrimination when it occurs.

[How I Became a Ghost: A Choctaw Trail of Tears Story](#)

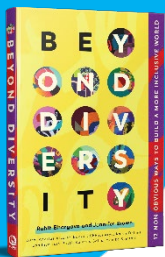
by Tim Tingle

This book discusses the story of a young Choctaw boy whose family and Native American community gets displaced on the Trail of Tears. The author deftly blends the overlooked history of Native Americans with suspense and a compelling narrative.

[Watercress](#)

by Andrea Wang

In *Watercress*, author Andrea Wang, narrates the story of a daughter of Chinese immigrants who move to a small town in Ohio. The story captures the young daughter's reckoning with her identity,



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heritage, and differences in a classroom of primarily White peers. This book discusses how racism and immigration impact a young child's experiences growing up.

Laxmi's Mooch

by Shelly Anand

This story by Shelly Anand discusses body positivity and body image issues experienced by a young Indian American girl who feels coerced to conform to White American beauty standards. The story captures important themes of self-love the protagonist undergoes and indicates how normative beauty standards and racism impact the psyche of young children of color.

Trickster: Native American Tales, A Graphic Collection

Edited by Matt Dembicki

Tricksters—beings that disrupt the widely accepted norm and order of things—are very important in Native American cultures and storytelling. This collection of 21 Native American folktales explores tricksters that show up in different forms using graphic imagery.

Let's Talk About Race

by Julie Lester

In this acclaimed book, the author of the Newbery Honor Book *To Be a Slave* shares his own story as he explores what makes each of us special. A strong choice for sharing at home or in the classroom. Karen Barbour's dramatic, vibrant paintings speak to the heart of Lester's unique vision, truly a celebration of all of us.

We Are Water Protectors

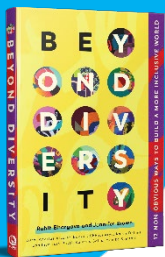
by Carole Lindstrom

Inspired by the many Indigenous-led movements across North America, *We Are Water Protectors* issues an urgent rallying cry to safeguard the Earth's water from harm and corruption—a bold and lyrical picture book written by Carole Lindstrom and vibrantly illustrated by Michaela Goade.

I Am Enough

by Grace Byers

This gorgeous, lyrical ode to loving who you are, respecting others, and being kind to one another comes from *Empire* actor and activist Grace Byers and talented newcomer artist Keturah A. Bobo.



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Song for a Whale

by Lynne Kelly

Full of heart and poignancy, this affecting story by sign language interpreter Lynne Kelly shows how a little determination can make big waves. From fixing the class computer to repairing old radios, twelve-year-old Iris is a tech genius. When she learns about Blue 55, a real whale who is unable to speak to other whales, Iris understands how he must feel. Then she has an idea: she should invent a way to "sing" to him! But he's three thousand miles away. How will she play her song for him?

The Girl Who Thought in Pictures: The Story of Dr. Temple Grandin

by Julia Finley Mosca

The Girl Who Thought in Pictures is the first book in a brand new educational series about the inspirational lives of amazing scientists. In addition to the illustrated rhyming tale, you'll find a complete biography, fun facts, a colorful timeline of events, and even a note from Temple herself!

The Name Jar

by Yangsook Choi

From acclaimed creator Yangsook Choi comes the bestselling classic about finding the courage to be yourself and being proud of your background. Being the new kid in school is hard enough, but what happens when nobody can pronounce your name? Having just moved from Korea, Unhei is anxious about fitting in. So instead of introducing herself on the first day of school, she decides to choose an American name from a glass jar. But while Unhei thinks about being a Suzy, Laura, or Amanda, nothing feels right. With the help of a new friend, Unhei will learn that the best name is her own.

My Rainbow

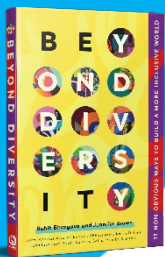
by DeShanna and Trinity Neal

A dedicated mom puts love into action as she creates the perfect rainbow-colored wig for her transgender daughter, based on the real-life experience of mother-daughter advocate duo Trinity and DeShanna Neal.

Genesis Begins Again

by Alicia D. Williams

This deeply sensitive novel tells the story of a 13-year-old who must overcome internalized racism and a verbally abusive family to finally learn to love herself. There are 96 reasons why thirteen-year-old Genesis dislikes herself. But when Genesis starts to find a thing or two she actually *likes* about herself, she discovers that changing her own attitude is the first step in helping change others.



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Teens

Ground Zero

by Alan Gratz

Author Alan Gratz covers two parallel stories—one of a young boy, Brandon, who visits his dad at work at the World Trade Center on 9/11 and the other of a young girl, Reshmina, who grows up in the midst of war and violence in Afghanistan. Both parallel narratives capture what it means to grow up in places that are perpetually in conflict and what humanity and unity look like in moments of inhumane violence.

Moccasin Thunder: American Indian Stories for Today

by Lori Marie Carlson

This collection of 10 short stories by Native American authors provides a deep insight into the everyday experiences of discrimination and stereotypes that young Native American people experience. The collection also includes stories of self-realization and legacies that are passed down across generations.

Hidden Roots

by Joseph Bruchac

Hidden Roots focuses on the life and discriminatory treatment of Native Americans and the lasting consequences of discrimination including but not limited to the loss of culture, identity, and history, lack of self-worth and fear that Native American communities continue to experience even today.

Grace for President

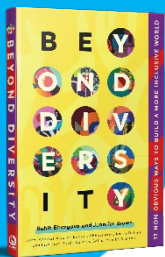
by Kelly DiPucchio

A fresh, fun, and "thought-provoking" *New York Times* bestseller about the American electoral college and why every vote counts from bestselling and award-winning duo Kelly DiPucchio and LeUyen Pham.

Other Words for Home

by Jasmine Warga

This is a story of a young girl who moves from Syria to America to get away from war and conflict in



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Syria. In America, the protagonist now faces a new set of challenges: Islamophobia, immigration, complicated notions of war, and a yearning to belong and find “home.” This story captures the experiences of a young, immigrant Muslim who is navigating complex circumstances of conflict in their home country.

Stamped: Racism, Antiracism, and You

by Jason Reynolds

This remarkable reimagining of Dr. Ibram X. Kendi's National Book Award-winning *Stamped from the Beginning* reveals the history of racist ideas in America and inspires hope for an antiracist future. It takes you on a race journey from then to now, shows you why we feel how we feel, and why the poison of racism lingers. It also proves that while racist ideas have always been easy to fabricate and distribute, they can also be discredited.

Felix Ever After

by Kacen Callender

From Stonewall and Lambda Award-winning author Kacen Callender comes a revelatory YA novel about a transgender teen grappling with identity and self-discovery while falling in love for the first time. *Felix Ever After* is an honest and layered story about identity, falling in love, and recognizing the love you deserve.

How It Feels to Float

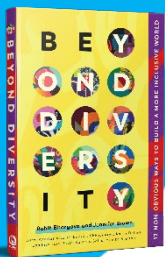
by Helena Fox

Debut author Helena Fox tells a story about love, grief, and inter-generational mental illness, exploring the hard and beautiful places loss can take us, and honoring those who hold us tightly when the current wants to tug us out to sea.

Unbroken: 13 Stories Starring Disabled Teens

by Marieke Nijkamp

This anthology explores disability in fictional tales told from the viewpoint of disabled characters, written by disabled creators. With stories in various genres about first loves, friendship, war, travel, and more, *Unbroken* will offer today's teen readers a glimpse into the lives of disabled people in the past, present, and future.



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Challenger Deep

by Neal Shusterman

A captivating novel about mental illness that lingers long beyond the last page, *Challenger Deep* is a heartfelt tour de force by *New York Times* bestselling author Neal Shusterman.

Parents

Last Stop on Market Street

by Matt de la Peña

This award-winning modern classic—a must-have for every child’s home library—is an inclusive ode to kindness, empathy, gratitude, and finding joy in unexpected places, and celebrates the special bond between a curious young boy and his loving grandmother.

You Matter

by Christian Robinson

In this full, bright, and beautiful picture book, many different perspectives around the world are deftly and empathetically explored—from a pair of bird-watchers to the pigeons they’re feeding. Young readers will be drawn into the luminous illustrations inviting them to engage with the world in a new way and see how everyone is connected, and that everyone matters.

It Feels Good to Be Yourself: A Book About Gender Identity

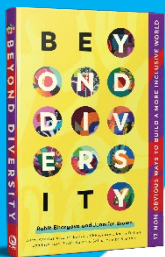
by Theresa Thorn

This picture book introduces the concept of gender identity to the youngest reader from writer Theresa Thorn and illustrator Noah Grigni. With child-friendly language and vibrant art, *It Feels Good to Be Yourself* provides young readers and parents alike with the vocabulary to discuss this important topic with sensitivity.

Different--A Great Thing to Be!

by Heather Avis

This joyful rhyming book encourages children to value the “different” in all people, leading the way to a kinder world in which the differences in all of us are celebrated and embraced.



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Just Ask!: Be Different, Be Brave, Be You

by Sonia Sotomayor

In *Just Ask*, United States Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor celebrates the different abilities kids (and people of all ages) have. Using her own experience as a child who was diagnosed with diabetes, Justice Sotomayor writes about children with all sorts of challenges—and looks at the special powers those kids have as well.

The Family Book

by Todd Parr

The Family Book celebrates the love we feel for our families and all the different varieties they come in. Perfect for young children just beginning to read, *The Family Book* is designed to encourage early literacy, enhance emotional development, celebrate multiculturalism, promote character growth, and strengthen family relationships.